

Bicycle Safety Fact Sheet

School-aged children, 5-18, account for more than 50% of all nonfatal bicycle injuries in MA. Each year, approximately 5,566 school aged children, are hospitalized or treated in emergency rooms for bicycle injuries. Among this population, most non-fatal bike injuries occur in 10 to 14 year olds; boys are also 3 times more likely to be injured as bicyclists than girls.

Most bike-related deaths are associated with a head injury. Without proper protection a fall from a bike can result in a skull fracture or a traumatic brain injury. Approved bike helmets (ANSI or SNELL) have been shown to reduce head injury by as much as 85%, yet in a recent study only 41% of children 5-14 years of age were observed to be wearing helmets (SAFEKIDS). M.G.L. c.85, s.11B (2)(iii) requires that a secured, approved, fitted helmet be worn by persons 16 years of age and under who are operating or being carried as a passenger on a bicycle, in-line skates, a skate board, a scooter or other manually-propelled wheeled vehicle.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY GOALS:

- teach bike safety in the classroom;
- encourage the purchase and wearing of bike helmets;
- develop policy requiring helmet use for students riding to school;
- model good bicycling behaviors for bicycling staff; and
- work with interested parents, service or other groups to organize bulk discount helmet promotion.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Utilize safety officers or other bike safety advocates in classroom education; sponsor bike hikes (with mandatory helmet use) after completion of bike safety curriculum. Incorporate bike helmet impact simulation experiments into science curricula and bike safety into poster or writing contests. Organize bike rodeos. Invite local retailers to provide incentives (coupons for bowling or ice cream) to children observed wearing helmets. One school organized an after-school historical bike tour for student cyclists. Others have used older students to help run on-bike classes for younger kids. One school helps recycle used bike helmets in good condition to give to students who need them.

RESOURCES: Local safety officers, Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts , local bike retailers and bicycling clubs, The Federal Highway Administration's Bicycle Safety Education Resource Center (<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/ee/fhwa.html>) SAFEKIDS Traffic Safety Magazine, discount helmet promotions available through distributors, including Children's Hospital Boston, SAFE Kids and Injury Free Coalition for Kids.

SPECIAL NOTE: May is Bicycle Safety Month, October is Head Injury Awareness Month,

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Injury Prevention and Control Program, DPH, Phone: 617-624-5413 Fax: 617-624-5075 Website: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/injury>

Governor's Highway Safety Bureau
Phone: 617-725-3301 Website: <http://www.mass.gov/ghsb>

Greater Boston SAFE Kids Coalition/Childhood Injury Prevention Program at the Boston Public Health Commission
Phone: 617-534-5197

SAFE Kids of Western Massachusetts
Phone: 413-794-5434

Injury Free Coalition for Kids
Phone: 617-355-2792 (Boston) and 508-344-1000 (Worcester)